



Connecticut State Dental Association

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**Legislative Testimony
SB 139 AAC Independent Monitoring of the HUSKY Program
Human Services Committee, Tuesday, February 23, 2010
Bruce Tandy, D.M.D.
President, CT State Dental Association**

My name is Dr. Bruce Tandy. I am a privately practicing dentist in Coventry and Vernon and currently serve as the President of the Connecticut State Dental Association.

The CT Dental Health Partnership (formerly known as HUSKY) has come a long way in a very short amount of time. Prior to 2008, CT had some of the lowest Medicaid dental reimbursement rates in the nation, with the last increase coming in 1993. Only 150 CT dentists participated in the program at that time, serving 44,088 children. During the 2007 legislative session, as the Legislature was preparing to raise reimbursement rates, the CT State Dental Association publicly pledged to increase dentist participation in the program from 150 dentists to approximately 400 dentists.

In April, 2008 the Legislature and Governor appropriated \$20M for increasing those rates. Additionally, we enthusiastically commend the Department of Social Services (DSS) for streamlining the administrative process by having a single Administrative Service Organization run the program which has helped with the program's success. Today, I am very proud to report to you that there are over 1,000 dentists that actively participate! Nearly 73,000 children are now estimated by DSS to be receiving dental care through this program, a 60% increase since the program's inception. All Partnership patients with "emergency" cases have received appointments within 24 hours. Patients with routine dental issues have received appointments within 18 days which closely mirrors wait times for private -paying patients. Utilization, the percentage of patients with state assistance coverage who utilize the services, has gone from the low teens to approximately 44%, among the highest in the country.

This is clearly a program that works, although there are reportedly some providers who have manipulated the system. The CT State Dental Association is strongly in favor of fair and diligent oversight of this program that has proven success. We feel that all parties, providers included, should be held to appropriate measures and standards.

I would be happy to answer any questions the members of this committee may have. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

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